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562 Among the many children's games, the girls prefer group games, singing and dancing. They also play with dolls. Boys often play alone with crude toys such as corncobs or plants which imitate weapons or agricultural implements.

178 There is little to say about how certain customs might influence, favorably or unfavorably, the Magyars' acceptance of Western techniques. An industrial revolution imposed by the Communists is now taking place in the country, transforming ancient methods of production, mechanizing agriculture and making the population increasingly aware of the 000 importance of industrialization for the entire national economy. What the Hungarians may have to learn in the future are not the techniques themselves, but the ways of infusing these techniques with the spirit of free enterprise and democratic co-operation.

The problem of acceptance and assimilation of Western political ideas is a more complex one and should be dealt with by historians and political analyists rather than by ethnographers. From the point of view of the folklorist, however, one could venture to say that the attitude of the Magyars toward social problems--as vaguely perceptible in the folk tales--is a patriarchally democratic

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526 During Lent godly, good Catholics know no dance
883 music or entertainment. But the young people must find some means to enable boys and girls to breathe the same air. To this end there are Lent games. One of these queer Lent-games is the «mancsozás» of the Palóc, an interesting ball game. But let us begin earlier than that, as this game has antecedents. It is a custom of the Palóc people (a particular tribe of the Hungarians) that at Carnival or fair dances a girl sends a bunch of flowers to her lover by her godmother. While dancing it blooms on his hat ... As an answer to this and to express his gratitude the lad, accompanied by a friend of his, brings the girl a «mancsozó». In return he gets any amount of excellent food. The «mancs» is a wooden ball, about the size of a nut, decorated with designs which are burnt into it. The «mancsozó» is an extraordinarily shaped stick, looking like a speaking-trumpet. It is even more extensively decorated than the «mancs» and is used for hitting the «mancs», as «mancsozás» is a ball game with peculiar rules. The wooden ball is not thrown with the hand, as is usually the case when playing ball, but the «mancs» must be thrown into the air and hit with the stick. At that moment the stick emits a sound, as in the bottom of it there is a bottle, closed with a stopper, and into the bottle the carver of the stick has put shot.

524 An even more interesting Lent game is the «sajbózás»,
883 which reminds one of Midsummernight customs. This strange game with fire is still played on the Northern reaches of the Tisza river. Its special date is the first Sunday of Lent. The «sajbó» is a wooden ring, with a diameter of half a foot. Each lad makes about 15 to 20 of them. A long stick is also wanted for the game; each lad has to take one with him. In the day time they build a small reed hovel on the village pasture, with a door so tiny that it only allows one person to stick his hands into it. Before the hut they put a bench or chair, and lean a plank askew against it, one of its ends being on the ground, and the other on the chair

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or bench. After dark the lads go to the hut with their long sticks and bunches of «sajbós». The girls are already expecting them, walking round the hut and singing. At the end of the song they kneel down and pray. Then the first girl of the village sets the hut on fire with a candle which has been blessed. At the fire the lads heat the «sajbó» rings one by one, until they glow. The strongest lad of the village has the first turn. When his «sajbó» is glowing, he shouts : 524 883

Sajbó, sajbó, whose sajbó is this?
This sajbó belongs to the Holy Virgin!

And with his stick he dashes the ring with such force against the plank, that it breaks away from the stick and flies off, cutting a fiery snake-like pattern in the darkness . . . Thus the game continues until they have shouted the names of all the saints, that is as many as they know by heart. Then they throw «sajbós» for the mothers, the fathers, eventually for the whole village; even the gipsies are remembered! Of course they do not forget their own selves, and when they have got to this point, couples are often shouted out together :

Sajbó, sajbó, whose sajbó is this?
It is mine and my sweetheart's!

883 the people soonest enabled them to buy linen and cloth for money and throw away their traditional tools.

The spinnery provides an opportunity for winter meetings. The Szeklers have called it after the tools used in it «spinning room», and after the singing going on in it «chorus». According to a general custom its premises are usually rented, and often there are several spinneries in one village. These places are small, not taking more than a group of eight to ten girls at a time. These groups are also called classes, like forms at school. The priest, or teacher, or landlord often runs spinneries with the object of helping needy farmers with their proceeds; but from the point of view of ancient custom these do not deserve special attention, as they are not suitable for the free development of moods, games and customs. The participants are reserved. It is like a wedding without music ... The work is not real and the fun is half hearted ... To use an expression coined on the Great Plain: it is too small for a bed and too big for a cradle! The spinnery is always an evening affair, although in some places the girls go to each other for practice also in the day-time, but that again is not the real thing, as the young men are missing, having other things to do. From the point of view of ancient custom the women's spinnery is not important either. There, too, work is taken much too seriously!

883 524 Spinning is a very monotonous, uninteresting task. It is a common occurence to see an old woman dropping her spindle and falling asleep. If the same thing happens to a girl it is a serious disgrace. Therefore, even if they are alone in the spinnery, they joke and sing so that their work shall go better. When the lads begin to drop in, they are even more awake. Spirits rise high, jokes come faster, and the spindle wants more attention. The girl who drops hers, must pay a ransom for its return. Ransoms vary as

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883 524 in round games. The most frequent ransom is a kiss; but it depends on the lad whether he gets as much as one coin from this inexhaustible purse.

They can pick up my spindle,
But I shant take it, I say,
Not this year and not the next,
Not for a kiss and not for pay.

When the young people have run out of tunes, they then turn to riddles; these puzzles often concern the tools used for spinning, weaving or hemp work.

The birch tree darted
The oak tree started
A thousand birds flew up,
One's wings got torn,
And then all the thousand stopped!

What is it? It is a thread breaking on the spinning wheel.

When their supply of riddles is also running low, they turn to games. To inaugurate a new girl is a game in itself. Those who have just reached the age enabling them to spin are called the *New Girls*. The others look for a little hole in the earth floor and pour water into it. This is supposed to be the «well». They seat the new girl by its side on the floor, to guard the well and prevent anyone drawing water from it. They even give her a whip to drive away all those who want to use the well. The bigger girls stand around her and try to draw the water, which the new girl guards. Meanwhile the girls standing behind attract her attention. As she turns round, those standing in front of the «well» pull her across the puddle! The girls only play this joke when there are no lads about.

The «gedo» is another of the girls' games. One of them makes a hump on her back with a bread basket, sticks on a beard and moustache of oakum, dons a coat and a hat,

883 524 — in one word dresses up as a man. Then she walks around the girls, asking each in turn:

«Has old Gedo been here?» — The answer is: «Yes, he has been here.»

«What did he want?»

«He wanted girls.»

«Did you give him girls?»

«Yes, we gave him girls and we will give you girls too, if you can plaster a stove (or plant cabbage, or make sheaves, etc.).» — She must now mimic the task mentioned. If she does it well, the girl who set the task has to take her place, if she is bad at it, she gets another task. This is a very primitive pantomime, the lads will be better at their games!

While the girls are still alone, they also like fortune telling and love charms. These are games, yet the girls believe in them a little. One of them is called «cucorka». The «cucorka» is a little hemp ball, which should rise in the air if set on fire. And if it does not fly up it means something bad: her lover is not true to her, or there will be no wedding... Sometimes the girls clap their hands so that the «cucorka» shall fly higher and they egg it on with the song:

Cu-cu-cu-cu-corka,
The magpie sent you word,
She wants a longer tail...

Another game is to make a triangle from oakum and lay it on the table. One of its corners represents a girl, the two others her two young men. The oakum is set on fire in the girls corner and the lad, whose corner the fire first reaches, loves the girl best. Of course the men have their own games and jokes, and keep inventing new ones for the girls and for their own amusement. The men approach the spinnery singing and the girls work better and harder as this song becomes audible from the street:

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Good girl do spin,
But think also of something else,
There is a lad outdoor in the cold,
Let the poor thing in!

Of course they let him in... Obviously he is welcome, when he has been so eagerly expected! With the lads present, spirits soar, the company is more cheerful, the songs louder, the jokes livelier... The work however, does not follow the same crescendo tendency!

The men have many more jokes up their sleeves and they are inexhaustible in improvising. It would take a whole book to describe all their games! But let us not omit one of their delightful, singing, mimic plays! — It is nothing but a primitive ballet, still alive, charming herald of the ancient trinity of poetry, music and motion... In Szekler spinneries, where lovely frail girls form the public, it is still performed to this very day. This ancient ballet lives not only in the pine forests of the Hargitta mountain (Transylvania), but also in Transdanubia, in the Bakony hills. Usually two men sing it, the one asking, the other answering. Occasionally it is also sung in a choir; its name is «sowing song».

I'd like to know how the Hungarians,
I'd like to know how the Hungarians
Sow their oats!

Showing it:

That's how the Hungarians sow
That's how the Hungarians sow
Their oats very slowly!

I'd like to know how the Hungarians
I'd like to know how the Hungarians
Reap their oats, reap their oats!

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Showing it:

That's how the Hungarians reap
That's how the Hungarians reap
Their oats very slowly!

Thus the song goes on, with little variation in the words, but with the mimicry altering from verse to verse: they ask and show how the Hungarians sow, reap, carry in, thrash and sell their oats. We are already inclined to think that the money is safe in the drawer and the remnants of the oats in the granary or mealark. But no! A play without a point is like an i without a dot. That is why there comes a sudden turn:

I'd like to know how the wife
I'd like to know how the wife
Steals the oats, steals the oats!

And then finally:

I'd like to know how the wife
I'd like to know how the wife
Drinks its price, drinks its price!

This is also told to the future wives, lest they should imagine that a man sees nothing and knows nothing and is good for nothing except for what the «Selling Song» thinks him fit: «.... a watch-dog, a fire-poker...»

Time however is getting on and all good things end... But not in a hurly-burly way. Things in the spinnery have to be finished neatly, «the full stop must be inserted», as a house has to be roofed to be complete! The finish — in those parts where the custom is still maintained — is the selling of the girls. Two older lads produce a twisted kerchief, and drive a girl to each lad... The kerchief is needed for those girls who «do not want to go...» And as it is unseemly to want to go, the two men throw the kerchief behind the girl's back and thus «help» her to go!

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883 524 Which means that they simply thrust her into a youth's lap! All this is accompanied by a song. If they feel like it, the song is long, otherwise it is merely a short selling song.

Double carnations have grown outside my garden,
I want you and only you, my Master Martin!

And at the final syllable the girl is already in the man's lap... There are longer selling songs too, and the interesting part is that in these the geese are mentioned in the same sense as in those parts of Midsummernight's song in which the couples are charmed together.

I drove away my goose into the middle of Saint George,
I sent my husband after it, to drive my goose home.
The goose shall come home, and my husband shall get lost,
But no! he shan't get lost, he is a nice, pipe smoking fellow!
He would be good here at home as a watch-dog,
As a watch-dog, as a fire poker,
My geese, my geese, there are twelve of you,
All the twelve of you are dead white,
Two of them are brown, the third is their mother,
What shall be the name of the fourth?
If it can't be Martin, I shan't have a lover,
But if it is Martin, I shall have a lover!

This can only mean that the pagan remnants of Midsummernight's mating feast have taken refuge in the closed territory of nocturnal spinneries, and here continue their life, which has been whittled away for centuries by secular and church prohibitions. In the first half of the 17th century a protestant preacher noted that *the boys played ball with the girls* in the spinneries. How could they have played ball in a small house, crowded with people? We do not know, but according to the preacher the spinnery is an occasio mali: a suitable place for wickedness, an abode of depravity... There is some truth in this. The girl having been driven to a man, comes the last verse of the song:

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For thee, to thy bed,
She shall lay on thy bed,
Thank thou for it!

Or: For him, to his lodging,
Let's cook for his wedding,
Thank thou for it!

And the girl has to thank for it, if only with a shy, low «thank you!» If she does not do this, perhaps disliking her «share», the choir damns her with ugly words:

Out in the graveyard
Nine dogs lie dead,
Spoons and forks are near them,
Eat them Mary, go ahead!

This happens especially in cases where the choir (the village really) has already given its blessing to a wellknown love affair. As soon as every lad has got his girl, as though they were following the lines of Midsummernight's song,

Your night
Flowery Saint John
Is so very light
— — — —
It was light so far
Now let it be dark.

they turn down the lamp and for a certain time, — for a few minutes, — darkness and complete stilness reign in the spinnery. One or two older men, left without partners, occasionally strike a match, not for the sake of looking at the roof, but to see what the partners are doing! Soon however the match is knocked out of their hands. After having lit the lamp again, the young people disperse and go home.

Two more proofs showing the close relationship between this ancient spinnery custom and the pagan Midsummernight feast are furnished by a Transylvanian «sell-

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ing song», which is sung to this day, and by the notes of the above mentioned preacher. This is what the song says about love and the sun: 883 524

When I think of you
My beautiful one,
Then love *flames*
Up in me.
Fire *flashes, the sun shines;*
Before his dazzled eyes
Roses blossom
And lilies bloom.

And finally this is what the above quoted protestant preacher wrote in 1629: «They used to lay a Saint John's fire in the middle of the village. Then they sat around it and spun. But we made them give up this custum.»

Thus the winter spinnery harbours amongst other things the tradition of a pagan Midsummernight feast, which fled into its precincts for protection against the Christian concept of life . . .

Plays of Bethlehem
Hungarian marionettes

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The Bethlehem players appear at the same time as the minstrels, in most places at Christmas, on the 25th of December, when the sun has its resurrection and gets stronger, and when the days begin to lengthen. Ever since ancient times this has been a great feast: the joyous, loud pagan feast of the Sun, that is the Sun-god. It is the beginning of a new year, of new hope, the recurring expectation of new light, new warmth, new life . . . Paganism awaits the new Sun, Christianity the birth of Christ . . . Is it an acci-

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after having spent the night in merry revelry in the village, erect May trees — slender saplings of which only the crown is preserved, richly decorated with coloured ribbons, kerchiefs, and a variety of odd little ornaments — in front of the houses of their best girls. On this same day the May-walk takes place. The maidens of the village go out to the forest, where they break fresh green boughs which, like the May-tree, they decorate with ribbons, kerchiefs, and other ornaments. Afterwards, in pairs, the long procession of girls parades with graceful, rhythmic movements through every street in the village, singing traditional May-songs.

On the Day of the Ascension, which falls always on the fortieth day after Easter, the youngest boys and girls receive their first Holy Communion. The older people gather in procession to offer prayer before the village Crucifix and before every cross erected within the boundaries of the village.

The sixteenth of May is the day of St John, Patron of the waterways and their users. The waterfolk celebrate this day with a colourful procession of brightly illuminated flower-decorated boats, at the head of which, in the most elaborate setting, the statue of the Saint is carried. On the shores, thickly lined with admiring throngs, burning torches are erected.

Urban is the Patron Saint of the vineyards. This Saint's Day, the twenty-fifth of May, is celebrated in the vineyards with a colourful ceremony.

Although many warm days of the late spring have gone by, it is only after the feast of Whitsuntide that summer really begins. Whitsuntide is celebrated amidst great rejoicing and with ceremonial games handed down from prehistoric times from generation to generation. The original meaning of these games has become some-

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what faded, but it can still be clearly traced. In some regions the lads organize driving or horse-riding races, in others the roping of the bull is the attraction of the day, which is followed by the election of the Whitsun King, recalling the tournaments of old which gave the setting for the election of tribal leaders. The Whitsun King's symbolic reign lasts only from Sunday noon to Monday evening, hence the much-quoted proverb recalling the brevity and futility of earthly things: "short as the Kingdom of Whitsun".

The election of a Whitsun Queen is another relic of ancient rites, surviving in the form of children's games. In some villages the girls choose one of their own, whom they parade round the village as their deeply veiled Whitsun Queen. They sing merrily the words of the age-old Whitsun song:

> In a rose-tree have I grown
> On Red Whitsun's Day...

and perform little games which recall the invocation of fertility practised in a forgotten past.

Corpus Christi is the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday, and is known as the Day of the Lord. It is Hungary's great festival in honour of the Holy Eucharist. Open-air altars are erected on this day in various parts of the villages, and a procession, of which perhaps only the picturesqueness is greater than the solemnity, visits these decorated altars in ritual succession.

One of the most popular and most interesting of the festivals of the summer is celebrated on the Day of St John the Baptist, the twenty-fourth of June, popularly known as St Ivan's Day. Originally the great festival of the summer solstice, today it has descended to us as a midsummer night's dream which reaches